

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 SP-02 PRS-01 L-01 RSC-01 DRC-01 IO-03 /048 W

----- 002931

R 150900Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6441

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6842

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, VT

SUBJ: ROKG--CATHOLIC PROBLEMS: FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING
WITH PAPAL SECRETARY OF STATE

1. MOFA AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR LEE SANG OCK GAVE
POL COUNS BRIEFING ON FOREIGN MINISTER KIM DONG JO'S
DISCUSSION WITH PAPAL SECRETARY OF STATE, CARDINAL VILLOT.

2. LEE SAID THAT FONMIN KIM WAS ORDERED TO ROME BY
PRESIDENT PARK IN ORDER TO MEET WITH THE POPE ON
PROBLEM OF CATHOLIC ANTI-GOVT ACTIVITIES IN KOREA.
BECAUSE OF CURRENT SYNOD, KIM WAS NOT ABLE TO ARRANGE
A MEETING WITH THE POPE BUT HE DID MEET WITH CARDINAL
VILLOT.

3. LEE SAID THAT FONMIN KIM GAVE CARDINAL DESCRIPTION
OF KOREAN POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION AND POINTED
OUT THAT UNDER KOREAN CONSTITUTION FREEDOM OF RELIGION
IS GUARANTEED. HOWEVER, HE SAID IT IS VIEW OF ROKG
THAT PRESENT ANTI-GOVT ACTIVITIES OF KOREAN PRIESTS
WERE NOT RELIGIOUS IN THEIR NATURE BUT POLITICAL
ACTIONS. CONSEQUENTLY, ROKG HOPED THAT KOREAN PRIESTS
COULD BE BROUGHT TO CONFINE THEIR ACTIVITIES TO PROPER
RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

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4. ACCORDING TO LEE, PAPAL SECRETARY OF STATE MADE THREE POINTS IN HIS REPLY. FIRST OF ALL, HE CONVEYED THE PARTICULAR AFFECTION WHICH THE POPE HAS FOR KOREA. SECONDLY, HE EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL APPRECIATION FOR KIM'S DESCRIPTION OF THE THREAT FROM NORTH KOREA. THIRDLY, CARDINAL VILLOT ASSURED KIM THAT THE VATICAN HAD NO INTENTION IN INTERFERING IN KOREA'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, AND THAT IT HOPED CURRENT DOMESTIC PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED QUIETLY AND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. CARDINAL VILLOT ALSO TOLD KIM THAT ARCHBISOP DOSSENA, THE PRO-NUNCIO IN SEOUL, HAD RECEIVED DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS AND SUGGESTED THAT KIM CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CHURCHMEN WITH THE PRO-NUNCIO AFTER THE MINISTER'S RETURN TO SEOUL.

6. LEE SAID THAT HE WOULD SUM UP THE CARDINAL'S COMMENTS AS BEING "SYMPATHETIC" BUT WITH NO COMMITMENTS. POL COUNS ASKED LEE IF SUBJECT OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP BY FONMIN KIM. LEE SAID FONMIN DID MENTION FOREIGN MISSIONARIES BUT THAT HIS MAIN FOCUS WAS ON KOREAN CHURCHMENT.

7. LEE SAID THAT FONMIN ALSO BRIEFED CARDINAL VILLOT ON BACKGROUND TO BISHOP CHI CASE AND ASSURED HIM THAT BISHOP WOULD RECEIVE A FAIR HEARING AT APPELLATE COURT.

8. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL ASST FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHOE KYU HA, CHOE NOTED THAT GOVERNMENT IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF SOME IRISH COLUMBAN FATHERS WHO ARE THE MOST VISIBLE AND BELLIGERENT OF FOREIGNERS IN THEIR ANTI-GOVT ACTIVITIES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ACTING FONMIN LHO ALSO CALLED IN THE NUNCIO ON OCT 13 TO CAUTION HIM ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES.

9. COMMENT: LEE'S DESCRIPTION OF WHAT KIM WAS TOLD BY CARDINAL VILLOT DIFFERS FROM FONMIN KIM'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ON HIS RETURN TO ROKG OCT 14. KIM IS QUOTED CONFIDENTIAL

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AS TELLING PRESS THAT VATICAN MADE CLEAR THAT CHURCHES OR CLERGYMEN SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, INCLUDING THE POLITICS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY. LEE'S DESCRIPTION OF KIM'S MEETING WITH CARDINAL VILLOT REPORTED ABOVE INDICATES THAT VATICAN RESPONSE WAS NOT SO FORTHCOMING.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SEOUL06842
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740293-0594
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741045/aaaabmhy.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROKG--CATHOLIC PROBLEMS: FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PAPAL SECRETARY OF STATE
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, VT, (KIM DONG JO), (VILLOT, CARDINAL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005